

Commons to refrain from meddling in such matters, was forced to give her assent.

It was to Parliament that the reformers addressed "The First Admonition" on behalf of a radical reform of Church government as well as ceremonial. The violent language of this philippic is that of men who are ready to lay their heads on the block for the truth for which they are persecuted, and who will neither comply nor compromise in these matters, in spite of all the penalties that "Her Majesty's High Commissioners" can inflict. They did not object to everything in the Prayer Book, but they would not be compelled to subscribe a compilation, as agreeable to the word of God, which "had been culled and picked out of that popish dunghill . . . the massbook, full of all abominations." Yea, the whole episcopal order "is drawn out of the pope's shop," and the episcopal government is, therefore, "antichristian and devilish, and contrary to the Scriptures." All the Church courts, from the archbishop's downwards, are "filthy quagmires which infect the whole nation with their abominations." The petitioners would be satisfied with nothing less than a Church government based on the presbyterian equality of ministers, and their election by the congregation. As for apparel, it is equally without scriptural warrant. But this is no mere controversy about garments; it is a quarrel about great principles. "Neither is the controversy betwixt them and us (as they would bear the world in hand) for a cap, a tippet, or a surplice, but for great matters concerning a true ministry and regiment of the Church according to the Word."

For presenting this revolutionary manifesto to Parliament, two of its joint-authors, Field and Wilcox, were arrested at the instigation of the bishops, and sent to Newgate. The Commons, however, again showed their Puritan sympathies by discussing two reform bills brought in by Mr Wentworth, and referring them to a select committee of both Houses. On this occasion Elizabeth was inflexible. She demanded the obnoxious bills, and forbade the Commons to discuss any proposal in reference to religion that had not received the approval of Convocation.

The episcopal party found a powerful controversialist in Dr Whitgift, vice-chancellor of Cambridge, who maintained,